

THE
I N S A N I T Y
OR
M A N K I N D.

ARTHUR TREVELYAN.

“Man’s actions *necessarily* result from his organic constitution, and the circumstances surrounding him at any given period.”—ZOIST.

EDINBURGH:
H. ROBINSON, 11, GREENSIDE STREET;
LONDON: H. BAUILLIERE.

M.DCCC.L.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY J. PATERSON AND CO., 7, OLD ASSEMBLY CLOSE.

THE INSANITY OF MANKIND.

INSANITY is inseparable from cerebral imperfection; and seeing cerebral imperfection occurs in every individual, therefore insanity is the fate of all the human race.

Sanity can never, on any occasion, deviate from reason; and as no one is at all times rational (so called), therefore are all mankind insane, often extra-insane.

Sanity is the attribute of perfection alone; and all the human race being at present imperfect—that is, having brains the different organs of which are unequally balanced—insanity must be the result; and those individuals who aver that they can draw the line of demarcation between the sane, so called, and the insane, must, in the first place, prove themselves perfectly sane. I ask, who is to be the Judge?

In vol. xvii. p. 60, of the Phrenological Journal, we find the following agreement to the foregoing:—“There is no individual in whom an harmonious balance of the mental powers is to be found; and consequently, if we speak with rigorous exactness, no human mind is in a right state.”

Education makes a most material difference in the conduct of many persons through life; in fact, unless individuals have good reasoning faculties, and possess moral courage, they seldom exhibit any alteration in the opinions engrafted on their cerebral organs in childhood, however adverse such opinions may be to all logical deductions; and although education has a great effect in forming the cerebration, still, when the individual is capable of reflection, opinions generally, in after life, become much modified, if not altogether altered; but in most of such cases we only know of the alteration, provided there is honesty enough to own it.

No organ of the brain can be abused by any individual, because what is called abuse is the natural action (*under circumstances*), of organs exceeding in size the organs that would control them, provided such controlling organs were sufficiently developed.

Our thoughts, words, and deeds, arise involuntarily from cerebration—that is, the action of the brain, and the circumstances we are placed in at the time those organs of the brain are excited—which circumstantial excitation produces such manifestations. Thus, none but the ignorant, or extra-insane, fancying themselves free-agents, blame or praise their fellow-men for their actions and opinions.

Those who are injured and pained by committing certain acts, either by putting themselves within the pale of revengeful laws, or by causing disease in their system, and destroying their lives by debauchery, or who commit crime while under the influence of intoxicating drugs, as alcohol, *cannot be accounted sane*; and thus, being non-responsible for their actions—unless it is a rational act knowingly to injure one's self—should not be punished as criminals, but treated as lunatics.

In vol. xvii. p. 89, of the Phrenological Journal, among the reviews, occurs the following passage, conformable to the above:—"To us," says the writer, "it appears that the criminal's knowledge of his act being against law, so far from increasing his guilt (if there be any), establishes its diminution. It proves a greater amount of mental alienation, for it implies a mind not under the regulation of the ordinary rules of prudence and common sense. By it the homicide exhibits himself as uncontrolled by the strongest principle in the reasoning man's nature—self-preservation. To send such men as these to the scaffold is not to serve, but to insult, justice." *

To the ignorant, the following assertions may appear to be absurd; but they are, nevertheless, undoubted facts:—That I, and many other persons can, by the examination of the map of the brain, as laid down on the exterior surface of the head, minutely describe the talents, opinions, morals, and animal feelings of any individual, and indeed state what his conduct will be when placed in certain circumstances. Thus, even religious feeling cannot escape us, it being quite easy, by means of the brain map, to decide whether or not the indi-

* "Criminal Jurisprudence considered in Relation to Cerebral Organization." By SAMPSON. An invaluable treatise, which should be studied by every intelligent person, particularly by Lawyers.—LON. HIGHLEY.

vidual is sincere in his profession of religion, and the amount of his belief.

Mesmerism,* faithfully applied, will remove all diseases and pains, however severe they may be. And Clairvoyance enables us to explain the nature and extent of disease—internally the appearance of the affected organ—the probability of recovery or not—the mode of treatment to be adopted; and the length of time that is to elapse before recovery takes place. It gives us the power to reveal the secret thoughts and deeds, both past and present, of individuals; and read unseen writing and printing; by its power, the moral lunatic who has committed crime of any description can be detected—the lost article recovered, and the secreted body, or other thing, discovered—friends can hear the fate of friends even in distant countries—and the innocent, falsely accused or suspected, saved from such accusation or suspicion, and the guilty individual pointed out. Thus, by mesmerism, *judicial murders* may be prevented.

Can we *Will* ourselves a geometer—an astronomer—a poet—a painter—or a mechanist—without possessing the peculiar organization of the brain from whence proceeds these talents? Can we *Will* ourselves moral, with the animal organs in excess of the moral region? or, can we *Will* the alteration of our views, moral, political, or religious, without conviction? No; then, how can we be Free agents?—for in the former case it is natural talents which give us the inclination, and enable us to attain such knowledge; and secondly, it is the moral organs in excess of the animal which give us the power to act morally; and in the latter case, it is conviction which compels us involuntarily to alter our opinions. Thus, Free agency is an attribute of perfection alone.

Are the moral and animal faculties less the result of cerebration than the intellectual? Away with such an absurdity; but with the usual injustice and inconsistency of the religious, they blame an individual for not being moral or religious, or for having large animal propensities, but do not blame a man for not being a poet, painter, or engineer, &c.†

“Man’s actions *necessarily* result from his organic constitution, and the circumstances surrounding him at any given period.”—ZOIST.

* Vital Magnetism.

† When I was at school, it was the custom (and, I regret to say, still is in many schools), to blame and punish those pupils who, from inability, were unable to learn their tasks.—A. T.

“ Men cannot believe what they will, nor change their religion and sentiments as they please. They may become hypocrites by the forms of severity, and constrained to profess what they do not believe; they may be forced to comply with external practices and ceremonies contrary to their consciences, but this can neither please God nor profit men.”—I. WATTS, D. D., *Imp. Mind.*

Religious belief depends upon education. The Brahmin—the Buddhist—the Confucian—the Mahometan—the Jew, and the Christian, and all other religious dogmas, and the off-sets of such dogmas, are believed in owing to their being inculcated in the human brain, when the brain is untenanted by any previous religious opinions. It is rare that an individual, educated in one religious belief, is sincere in his change to another.

Where would Mahometanism and Christianity now have been, if the sword, the fire, and the rack, had not been employed to coerce individuals to follow those beliefs? Traditional existence alone would have been their fate.*

Nothing exhibits the insanity of the human race in a greater degree than a belief in the sanity of—the suicide—duellist—assassin—men hired to destroy the lives of those who never injured them, as soldiers, hangmen, and other murderers—gamblers and other thieves—liars and other deceivers—drinkers of alcoholic liquors, whether in excess or not, and habitual users of other narcotics (except as medicines)—non-restrainers of their anger—haters of their fellow-men—revengers of injuries—persecutors for opinion, &c., &c., and all those who commit acts injurious to themselves.

A man cannot be sane who at any time commits acts at variance to reason, neither is it rational for a man to injure himself.

Ask me why I am not religious, in the sense generally understood in Christendom, and I answer, my insanity takes not that cast. Although my veneration is not deficient, it is controlled by my reasoning faculties, which luckily happen to possess a larger portion of cerebral matter, than those organs which alone produce religious feeling. Religion is not an abuse of veneration, but the natural language of that organ in man when in a savage state; in civilized life (so called) it un-

* “ Religious wars among Christians, and deaths from the Holy Inquisition, have cost the lives of at least 67,000,000 of human beings.”

fortunately is educated, or else religion would not exist, except in a few extra-insane cases, where veneration is in excess of the reasoning faculties; religion being a blind impulse, as is shown in the case of certain idiots, and individuals who, although very religious, are what the law calls criminals, and accordingly sometimes are hung.

Individuals exhibit great ignorance of the constitution of man, who expect men and women to be honest, benevolent, and moral, that in childhood are theoretically initiated into the grossest vices, immoralities, cruelties, and dishonest traits of character, by being educated in a book abounding in passages unfit for modesty to hear, much less to deliberately study; and taught to believe to be true a book abounding in contradictions, interpolations, and mistranslations; and yet, with all these imperfections, priests assert it to be the work of the Creator of the universe! but only because they are well paid for doing so. Verily, they lie for gain. Can modesty or benevolence dwell in the brain of that female who can read such a book, wholly through, without blushing and shuddering? And what can we think of the moral condition of parents, teachers, priests, &c., who knowingly put such a book into the hands of the youth of both sexes, and who, at least in the English law church, employ expressions out of it, even in the pulpit, unfit to be uttered in a promiscuous assembly?

Can there be a greater insult to a conscientious, reasoning, and moral man, than to ask him if he believes in the truth and authenticity of a book abounding in contradictions, interpolations, mistranslations, and stories immoral and dishonest, some of which are actually *said to be* divinely * inspired, ordered, and approved of?

The self-righteous have a more friendly feeling towards the immoral church attender, than towards the moral man who shuns those buildings; and why? because the immoral church goer assists to pay the priests, whilst from the moral non-church attender they get no cash.

Nature has destined some persons to be born with such a low moral feeling, that they imagine immoral language, when cloaked by religion, becomes moral; and that such language taught to youth, because so cloaked, is harmless—a most lamentable error, but an error of ignorance, and of moral and religious insanity.

* Divinely is derived from *Dii vini*—gods of wine.

It is only ignorant individuals, or individuals of low moral feeling—that is, who are deficient in the moral attributes of benevolence and conscientiousness, therefore moral lunatics, or who labour under religious insanity—that would knowingly put a book, containing even one immoral expression, into the hands of youth, much less a so-called holy book, in which are numerous passages the perusal of which must make even the adult, if strictly moral, shudder, and the perusal of which must contaminate the moral feelings, and excite the animal passions either in youth or in age.

“ Morality and truth are principles in human nature both older and more wide-spread than Christianity or the Bible; and neither Jesus, nor James, nor John, nor Paul, could have addressed, or did address men in any other tone than that of claiming to be themselves judged by some pre-existing standard of moral truth, and by the inward power of the hearers. Does the reader deny this? or, admitting it, does he think it impious to accept their challenge? Does he say we are to love and embrace Christianity without trying whether it is true or false? If he says Yes—such a man has no love or care for truth, and is but by accident a Christian. He would have remained a faithful heathen had he been born in heathenism, though Moses, Elijah, and Christ, preached a higher truth to him. Such a man is condemned by his own confession, and I here address him no longer.”—*Phases of Faith*, by F. W. NEWMAN.

“ The belief in supernatural existences, and the expectation of a future life, are said to be sources of happiness and stimuli to virtue. How, and in what way? Is it proved by experience? Look abroad over the earth: everywhere the song of praise—the prayer of supplication—the smoke of incense—the blow of sacrifice—arise from the forest and lawn, from cottage, palace, and temple, to the god of human idolatry. Religion is spread over the earth. If she be the parent of virtue and happiness, they too should cover the earth. Do they so? Read the annals of human tradition! Go forth and observe the actions of men! Who shall speak of virtue, who of happiness, that have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel? No! experience is against the assertion. The world is full of religion, and full of misery and crime.”—*A few Days in Athens*, FRANCES WRIGHT.

If there was no money to be made by religion, there would be no outward observance of divine worship.

Religion is the grand curse that alike disunites the domestic

circle, disunites mankind, and disunites nations—thus causing jealousy, and strife; consequently, hatred, revenge, and murder.*

“One thing, indeed, appears remarkable, that the variety of religions and gods in the heathen world neither produced wars nor dissensions among the different nations.”—**MOSHEIM.**

I find by experience that those persons who lay the greatest stress on the necessity of the external forms of religion, are invariably the greatest hypocrites.

The idle rich, who have every day to employ as they fancy, the bigot, the selfish, the extra-insane, and those who make a trade of religion (unfortunately being idiots to a sense of conscientiousness and benevolence), force the poor (by threats of vengeance, and putting every obstacle in the way of innocent amusement on Sunday), to visit their temples of worship on the only day of the seven which they might call their own, were they permitted to do so, and thus be enabled to enjoy the beauties of nature morally, intellectually, and physically. In fact, such tyrants are sycophants and hypocrites, and are seldom contented unless they bring others into an equally moral degradation with themselves; and they find an effectual way of success in that point, by closing on Sunday all sources of innocent amusement, and leaving the sources of immorality open—namely, temples of worship to the gods Venus and Bacchus; and battles fought on Sundays, even between professing Christians, have never been exclaimed against by the rigidly godly powers, priests, and bishops. No; they are blind and dumb to the moral enormities committed by a government that countenances their trade of deceiving the people.

To pass charitably and peaceably through life, requires us to feel what is actually the case—*i.e.*, that all mankind are either insane or extra-insane, and accordingly treat them with that kindness and forbearance taught us by a knowledge of phrenology, and the phrenological treatment of the insane.

“So far from the Creator having sent into the world some beings who are responsible, and others who are exempt from responsibility, there is, in fact, no exception whatever; and that every human being is alike responsible—responsible (according to the degree of his departure, either in mind or body, from that degree of sanity necessary to the proper discharge of his social duties), to undergo the painful but benevolent

* “When truth is evident, it is impossible to divide people into parties and factions. Nobody disputes that it is broad day at noon.”—**VOLTAIRE.**

treatment which is requisite for his cure. From this it would be seen that I hold that the mere fact of an individual having committed, or attempted to commit a crime, should be taken as sufficient evidence that his mind is in an unsound state, since in any society, the only test that we can have of insanity is that which is furnished by the existing laws. There is no individual in whom an harmonious blending of all the mental powers is to be found; and consequently, if we speak with rigorous exactness, 'no human mind is in its right state;' but societies, by their laws, define what *they consider to be* the proper manifestations of the mind, and the various acts which indicate its depravity. The man who acts in strict conformity with all the laws and customs to which society demands obedience, is held by that society to be a '*right-minded man*;' while he who infringes any one of them is held, to the extent of his infringement, to be of '*depraved mind*.' The terms *sanity* and *insanity* have hitherto not been used, because it has been the custom to regard the manifestation of the feelings and passions as taking place in complete independence of the health or sound conformation of the brain; but the error of this belief having been fully demonstrated, we are at once compelled to take unsound acts as evidence of an unsound brain; and hence obedience to the laws in criminal, and to the customs of society in civil cases, must come to be regarded as the true tests of mental sanity."—ZOIST.

"Nature offers to every sane mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please—you cannot have both. Between these, as a pendulum, man oscillates ever. He in whom the love of repose predominates, will accept the first creed, the first philosophy, the first political party he meets, most likely his father's. He gets rest, commodity, and reputation; but he shuts the door of truth. He in whom the love of truth predominates, will keep himself aloof from all moorings, and afloat; he will abstain from dogmatism, and recognise all the opposite negations, between which, as walls, his being is swung. He submits to the inconvenience of suspense and imperfect opinion, but he is a candidate for truth, as the other is not, and he respects the highest law of his being."—EMMERTON'S *Essays*.

"In intellectual matters (indeed in all branches of art and science), the prejudices, the selfishness, or the vanity of those who pursue them, not unfrequently combine to resist improvement, and often engage no inconsiderable degree of talent in drawing back, instead of pushing forward, the advancement of

science. The introduction of new methods (or bringing forward old truths as 'vital magnetism,') must often change the relative place of the men engaged in scientific pursuits, and must oblige many, after descending from the stations they formerly occupied, to take a lower position in the scale of intellectual improvement. The enmity of such men is likely to be directed against methods by which their vanity is mortified, and their importance lessened."—Prof. PLAYFAIR, *Sup. Ency. Brit.* Pt. ii. p. 27.

"Lord Erskine, in commenting on the errors of Lord Hale, who measured the responsibility of the insane by the integrity of the intellectual powers, says: 'If a total deprivation of *intellect* was intended to be taken in the literal sense of the word, then no such madness ever existed.' 'It is,' he says, '*idiocy* alone which places a man in this helpless condition; where, from an original mal-organization, there is the human frame alone, without the human capacity. I have found the insane,' he continues, 'not only possess the most perfect knowledge and recollection of all the relations they stood in towards others, and of the acts and circumstances of their lives, but to have been, in general, remarkable for subtlety and acuteness.'"—ZOIST, v. i. p. 261.

"Idiocy is so closely allied to insanity, that it is impossible to draw any distinct line of demarcation, or to say where insanity ends and idiocy commences. The two states are often blended together, and the phenomena in many points very nearly resemble, though arising in a different cause. The insane, equally with the idiots, are creatures of imperfectly organized brains—insanity proceeding from an unhealthy condition in the undue excitement of one or more sets of nerves or organs, or from some local, or more or less general paralysis, disunion of parts, unusual association, or fixedness of any deranged action, producing, by such and similar irregular conditions, those effects which we confuse together under the general term of insanity. When the action of the brain is deranged, or there is want of harmony or proper restraint among the faculties, the man hobbles, he is not in his senses, which is to say that all his senses are not acting in their usual and healthy condition. The music is more or less discordant, according as this or that particular note or set of notes be out of tune; and as we mostly judge, particularly under any undue excitement, according as we feel or perceive—for a judgment is but a more enlarged perception—the individual is seldom fully aware of the precise state of his own imperfec-

tions,—hence the constant delusion of the insane that they are well, and might be released. Insanity is often so strongly blended with the most exalted intellect and genius, that we cannot wonder at Shakespeare, who, observing so many apparently strange contradictions, should exclaim, and with more truth than may be found in the combined wisdom of our twelve judges: ‘That to define true madness, what is it, but to be nothing else but mad?’ However, with our present knowledge, we may at least show some little method in our madness, and effect something by our efforts in ministering to a mind diseased, with more certainty and satisfaction; here at least we may see how that knowledge which is power is the power of goodness and mercy.”—Zoist, v. ii. p. 167.

“Idiocy is a deficiency of power arising from the small size, inferior quality, or other imperfect and depressing condition of the brain or some of its parts. Idiocy is any local or more or less general weakness, either constitutional, or the result of some temporary cause. Insanity is an undue excitement, or irregular and unhealthy tendency. In idiocy the brain may be well developed, excepting in one organ; or the brain may be deficient, with the exception of one or two faculties, or more, as the case may be, and which faculties may even be in excess—as a man may lose his arms and retain his legs, and which may gain in strength by the loss of the arms. There are idiots of every degree—some are violent, others affectionate; some will manifest the religious faculties; some are just and truthful, others liars and thieves; one may be kind, another selfish, meek, or obstinate and violent; others are cunning and sharp-witted; indeed, any particular faculties or talents may predominate and shine forth in unrestrained excess, and there are few so bad as not to possess some virtue or talent, or so elevated as not to exhibit some peculiar and marked deficiency.*

“Thus are there idiots of every class and grade; for an idiot simply means a creature more or less defective, and below the average condition; and by imperceptible steps we rise from the lowest conceivable condition up to the most exalted

* “I know several glaring instances at this moment of gentlemen of high standing in society miserably deficient in the organ of conscientiousness, and yet they are agreeable, kind, and intelligent, but at the sametime guilty of the grossest acts of injustice. These men are blind, or idiots, in the sense of injustice.”

I also know plenty of individuals, both male and female, of all grades of society, who, in their acts, are perfect idiots to the sense of honesty.—A. T.

being. We are all of us, therefore, more or less idiots; and as there are no brains, even the most superior, which have not some irregular action or undue excitement going on, some fixed prejudice or habit of thought, some antipathy or superstition, none who are entirely free to think and to feel correctly on every subject—so are we all more or less insane, down, by imperceptible degrees, to the most grotesque and degraded condition; and thus, finding that we cannot reason correctly on the one side, or see or feel correctly on the other, how much is there to humble our pride, that we are but elevated by little and little, according to the state of the brain, from the condition of the infant and the idiot, to the worm which crawls upon the ground. Nothing can be clearer than the evidence of this chain of gradation, that there is no very observable or essential line of distinction between the sentient condition of the lower animals and the idiotic and insane; and again, between these and the more exalted. A cerebral condition was a Bacon—the cerebral condition made the idiot—the cerebral condition made the dog and the worm. The physical condition is the creature from high to low. We are all alike in the results of our organization, more or less favourably influenced by the circumstances around us; and were the brain indeed but a single organ, manifesting the different properties which are mind, if such were possible, still should we rise by imperceptible degrees from weakness to strength, from every shade of irregular action to the most perfect condition; but since the brain is proved to be a congeries of organs, each having its special action or function, and which organs are found associated in endless variety of proportions in different individuals; there is no type of perfection, and no two are alike; each has his peculiar gift or genius, and his defects, his duties to perform, his place in the scale of intelligence, and appropriate field for exertion; and such must ever be the case, however much we may be enabled on the whole to elevate the race in the general progression of social improvement arising in the advance of knowledge, and pain and misery, good and evil, beauty and deformity, will more or less ever continue to be the lot of man. The plan of nature is unjust and cruel to individuals, but ever working for the general good. A little inquiry into nature's ways would show the absurdity of any visionary notions of perfectability, and bring us down again to earth with a more wholesome condition of mind to labour on for the great reward which there exists in the charms of truth and beauty, and the joy of seeing others

made happy through our exertions."—Zoist, v. ii. pp. 167-169.

"By many, we fear, that the term *instinct* is used in relation to brutes in the same way that the term *mind* is used in relation to man—as a certain power superadded to matter, and causing it to manifest certain phenomena. As in man it has hitherto been considered necessary to enlist an essence to explain phenomena, which remain after the pretended explanation just as mysterious; so, in the inferior tribes, the term instinct has been presumed to solve all difficulties—the distinctive characteristics of each tribe, as regards cerebral manifestations, have been duly recorded, and this indefinable, because unascertainable power, has been considered the cause. That we are correct in this statement, we might quote a variety of passages from several recent writers, but the following clear and explicit recognition of the doctrine, from the pen of Lord Brougham, will suit our purpose: 'Instinct is one and indivisible, whatever we may hold it to be in its nature, or from whatever origin we may derive it. The thing, or being, is variously applied, and operates variously. There are not different instincts, as of building, of collecting food for future worms, of emigrating to better climates, but one instinct, which is variously employed or directed.'"—Zoist, v. ii. p. 144.

"The peculiar powers put forth by an animal are the *necessary* result of its peculiar formation; and to assert that instinct prompts to the performance of a certain action, seems to us an attempt to intrude a power which we cannot recognise, of the existence of which we have no proof, and the intrusion of which into scientific discussions is opposed to all sound philosophy. Instinct is not a power producing certain phenomena, but instinctive actions are the result of the activity of peculiar nervous organisms. We cannot tell *why* such a form of matter manifests such peculiar functions: it is quite sufficient for us to ascertain that it does so; beyond this we may never go. We contend, then, that an animal is not prompted by instinct to the performance of a certain action, but that being endowed with a peculiar organism, the resultant activity of this organism, which is the necessary sequence of the application of certain stimuli, is the performance of an action, which we call an instinctive action, in contradistinction to a rational action, because the former is performed without knowledge or experience to guide it.

"Thus, in the infant, the act of sucking is a very good il-

lustration of an instinctive process. Here there can be no doubt, because the act has been successfully performed when the brain has been absent; and we may therefore doubt, as regards this action, whether consciousness is a requisite condition. Broussais considers instinctive actions to arise always from sensations which solicit a living being to execute involuntarily, and often unconsciously, certain acts necessary for its welfare.”—ZOIST, v. ii. p. 146.

“ An instinctive action is an action performed by a being, resulting from neither observation or experience—perfect from the first, as regards the means used, and the end to be obtained—always the same in all healthy animals of the same species, and the necessary result of a peculiar organism.

“ A rational action is an action performed by a being, resulting from observation and experience, and therefore capable of being improved—seldom precisely the same in any two animals of the same species, but nevertheless the necessary result of the degree of development and exercise of a peculiar organism.”—IBID.

“ The great truth has finally gone forth to the ends of the earth, that man shall no more render an account to man for his belief, over which he himself has no control. Henceforward, nothing shall prevail upon us to praise or blame any one for that which he can no more change than he can the hue of his skin, or the height of his stature.”—BROUGHAM.

“ Each individual is so organized, that he *must like* that which is pleasant to him, or which, in other words, produces agreeable sensations in him; and *dislike* that which is unpleasant to him, or which, in other words, produces in him disagreeable sensations; and he cannot know, previous to experience, what particular sensations new objects will produce on any one of his senses.”—OWEN.



